

**Workshop on Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in SADC Region
1-5 December 2008
Blantyre, Malawi**

Preliminary Agenda

1. Registration

2. Opening

3. Getting acquainted

Participants give a brief statement on their background and expectations from the meeting.

4. Logistics and purpose of the meeting

The agenda and provisional work programme will be discussed and adjusted as needed and general information about the meeting and organizational issues will be presented.¹

5. Presentations and discussions on substantive topics

Session 1: Sources of vital statistics - 0.25 day

It introduces and compares the three sources used to obtain vital statistics —civil registration, population censuses and sample surveys— and discusses the purposes for which they are best suited, their major advantages and limitations. Recognizing the importance to collect fertility and mortality statistics through the 2010 round of population census for SADC countries, the session also introduces the core topics on fertility and mortality recommended by the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 2*.

Session 2: Civil registration as a source of vital statistics (UN standards) – 1.25 days

The session is in three parts. The first part focuses on international standards, principles and recommendations in using civil registration as a continuous basis for vital statistics, especially during the inter-censal period. It continues by covering the basic characteristics of a civil registration system as a source of vital statistics, highlighting the necessary legal framework, administrative structure, technical settings and government and public involvement. It encompasses also the other roles of civil registration, such as civil and human rights, protection of children and internationally adopted covenants.

The second part reviews techniques that can be used to estimate the coverage of a civil registration system. The level of coverage is not only important as a necessary corrective measure for statistics, but also as an indicator of the functioning of the civil registration system and possible gaps.

¹ The agenda will also be adjusted after the pre-workshop assignments are gathered from workshop participants.

The third part of the session provides an overview of the international standards on the collection of cause of death data through the civil registration system. The session also creates a platform for countries in the region to share good practices in gathering cause of death statistics.

Session 3: National experiences in generating vital statistics – 1.25 days

The session provides an opportunity to share and learn from national experiences in generating vital statistics from various data sources and the levels of development of civil registration using the information gathered through the pre-workshop assignments. In addition the presentations on national experiences with civil registration as the main source for obtaining vital statistic and group discussion will seek to highlight the state of and need for improvement in the civil registration systems in participating countries. An expected outcome of the group discussions would be strategies to improve civil registration and vital statistics, in both medium and long terms.

Session 4 (group discussions): Training and public education – 0.25 day

Major reasons for the low coverage of civil registration in most of the SADC countries include the lack of awareness of the public regarding the importance of civil registration and insufficient training of the public as well as the professionals. The goal of total coverage of vital events by the civil registration system demands that education take place at the national, regional and local levels. The session will assist the participants in understanding various approaches to training staff and devising public education, information and communication strategies to improve the efficiency of civil registration and vital statistics system.

Session 5 (group discussions): Model civil registration law – 0.25 day

The session will get participants familiar with the model civil registration law, provided by the *Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics: Preparation of a Legal Framework*. The discussion will focus on the similarities and differences between the model law and the existing civil registration law existed in individual countries and identify areas in national civil registration law that needs modification.

Session 6: Compilation of vital statistics at international level – 0.25 day

The session reviews the data and metadata requirements at international level for vital statistics, as indicated on the *Demographic Yearbook* vital statistics questionnaire. It also assesses how well participating countries are able to comply with the international standard and propose ways to improve both the level of responses and the quality of data provided to the *Demographic Yearbook* questionnaire.

Session 7: Conclusions and Recommendations -0.5 day

The conclusions of the workshop and accompanying recommendations will be drawn from plenary, group discussions, presentations of national experiences and other contributions. The summary of the workshop's proceedings will be outlined, and the conclusions and recommendations on how to improve the quality of vital statistics in Western Asian countries presented and discussed.

6. Field trip to the Department of Registrar General of Malawi (tentative).

7. Evaluation of the workshop

Participants will complete an evaluation form circulated during the course of the workshop, and share in plenary their perspectives on how the meeting was organized, required follow-up upon return to their respective countries and suggestions for improving future workshops.

8. Closing